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must observe. If the patient dies, the *ombiasy* does not receive the final fee, but he retains the initial fee and is not punished, except by loss of prestige. In case of an epidemic the *ombiasy* gives protective medicine to everyone in the village. 755

As a rule the *ombiasy* is only applied to in serious cases. In every village there are old people of both sexes who treat minor ailments without any pretensions to magic. These practitioners use herb remedies, for the most part, and some of their medicines possess real value. Inflammation is relieved by cupping. The operator makes a small incision in the skin, places the tip of a horn over it, and exhausts the air by suction. The small end of the horn is covered with a lump of soft wax and when the vacuum has been formed this is pressed together with the tongue, sealing the opening (Fig. 23, h). The horn is left on until the suction has filled it with blood. Boils and abscesses are never lanced, but may be poulticed to bring them to a head. Fractures are treated by the *ombiasy* or by persons having a special charm for the purpose. In some cases the art seems to be hereditary in families. A decoction is made by boiling the leaves of various plants in water, or they are pounded and mixed with grease, and the limb is rubbed with this. The bone is set and the limb placed in leaves with a heavy bandage. No splints are used. 757 ! A

SLEIGHT OF HAND

The Tanala *ombiasy* make comparatively little use of sleight of hand. The idea that illness is due to some foreign body which has been thrown into the afflicted person seems to be lacking, so there is little reason to exercise it. However, some practitioners use sleight of hand to show their powers and impress their clientele. A Tanala *ombiasy* resident among the Betsileo staged an exhibition for me as follows: He spread a new mat on the floor and placed upon it two large bowls, one empty, the other filled with water. Beside these he laid a club made from half of a sawfish's saw. This, he said, was a sort of magician's wand. Anyone struck by it would die. For the exhibition, it simply increased the power of the other charms. When these objects had been arranged, he drew from his waistcloth a charm made from sticks of wood packed into the hollow of a small horn. He placed this, large end down, in the dish of water and allowed it to steep for about ten minutes. He then removed it and placed it in the dry bowl. After this, he asked me to give him something that he could chew up and swallow. I offered him a piece of ordinary paper about three inches square. He steeped this in the water for a short time, then folded it and pressed it to the

719 [759] 756

! [See category 46, p. 205 - analysis]

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304 hereditary and no special prestige attaches to it. The tools are a small knife (Fig. 1, f), a flat piece of wood on which the cutting is done, and various herb remedies to stop the bleeding. The operation [757] is always performed in the cold season, as wounds heal more readily at that time. Apparently infection is rare and I never heard of death or even serious complications following the operation.

304 852 916 Among the Tanala Ikongo circumcision is a family ceremony. The operation may be performed a few days after birth, but is usually delayed two to five years. The members of the family assemble in the *trano be* ("village assembly house"). The head of the lineage brings a pot of rum or *betsabetsa* ("honey beer") to be drunk after the ceremony. He opens the eastern door of the *trano be* and addresses a prayer to the ancestors, asking that there may not be much bleeding and that the wound may heal quickly. If the father is rich and wishes to honor the child he may kill an ox, but this is to provide meat for the feast, not as a sacrifice.

After the head of the lineage has prayed, the father places the child between the horns of the ox, if one has been killed, or holds him on his knees, facing forward. The *mpamora* ("circumciser") lays the child's penis on his cutting board, draws the foreskin as far forward as possible, and cuts it off with a single stroke. The wound is then washed with an astringent liquid made from the leaves of an unidentified bush. The foreskin is thrown on the roof of the house or, less frequently, is pressed into a soft banana and eaten by the father. The circumciser's fee is a cock and 1.20 francs in money. If an ox has been killed he receives the head in addition to his regular share of the meat. The ceremony ends in a feast with singing, dancing, and liberal drinking.

Among the Tanala Menabe most of the ceremonial accompaniments of circumcision have disappeared. The annual ceremony, to be described later, is no longer held. There are itinerant circumcisers who travel from village to village. Whenever they see a child who has not been circumcised they ask permission to perform the operation and do so without formality. Their regular fee is a cock and 0.60 franc in money.

852 304 Until about twenty years ago each village held an annual circumcision ceremony at which all children born during the preceding year were operated upon. The ceremony was announced some time in advance and people from smaller or dependent villages would bring in their children also, so that as many as thirty or forty might be circumcised at one time. Before a child could be circumcised it